

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES

May 27, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Jose Martinez, second Vice Chair at 1:50 pm. Introductions were done. The agenda for April was approved. Minutes for April 2009 were accepted with two corrections: In the Rider's Guide it will read door to door service and clarification of time spent in a vehicle to be equivalent to fixed route time.

Attendance: Ronald Fulton, Damian Gregory, Jose Martinez, John Miller, Jose Granda, Denise Valkema, Val Schmidt

Chairperson's Report: Damian Gregory had an excused tardy so the Chairperson's Report was tabled.

Old Business: Since Mr. Gregory was not yet present at the beginning of the meeting, Ms. Hyams reported that she was going to the Police training academy next week to understand what type of training the police officers receive about people with disabilities. Ms. McNally asked that Ms. Hyams bring up service animal since people are still having problems bring a service animal into some stores. Mr. Dicey said he was approached by a Police Officer because he was carrying a folded white cane and the Officer thought it was a weapon. Mr. Granda wanted the Police to be reminded that people who are deaf should not be handcuffed from behind.

Access-Transportation Committee: Ms. Hyams read the Para-Transit RFP comment letter that was sent to the County Commissioners, the Mayor, the County Manager, Mr. Kapoor, Ms. Lewis, and Ms. Cox. The letter was a recommendation by the Access/Transportation committee and signed by Damian Gregory.

Motion made by John Miller and seconded by Ronald Fulton to have the Para-Transit RFP comment letter, which was from the Access/ Transportation committee be endorsed by the full board. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Miller also asked that the contents of the letter be recorded in the minutes.

On May 21, the Transportation/Access Committee (TAC) of the Commission on Disability Issues (CODI) met to discuss the proposed Para-Transit RFP. CODI was unable to formulate an official opinion since the next general meeting of CODI will be after the ten day comment period; however the comments below reflect the opinion of the entire Transportation/Access Committee.

- Para-Transit service must remain 24/7 County-wide without regard to the fixed route corridor.
- No circuitous route beyond three miles in any direction other than the destination direction shall be accepted.
- Reservation hours shall remain from 8:00 am. to 5 pm.
- All on-board technology will be in place when service begins under this new contract.
- Same day emergency trips authorized by the County for a medically related appointment or for an individual with an accessible van which breaks down while they are away from home should be included in the RFP. These emergency situations require 24/7 coverage.
- One key term that needs to be explicitly defined is "negotiated" pick up time. The negotiated pick up time should be agreed upon before the reservation call ends and should not be allowed to be changed, since people with disabilities often rely on others in order to help them prepare to keep their appointments.
- High top vans must have a step with adequate hand grips to assist passengers embarking and disembarking. Sedans must also have adequate hand grips.
- All ambulatory passengers should face forwards when being transported.
- Documentation in written form must be provided by bus operations to support the decrease in miles per hour from 12 miles per hour to 8 miles per hour; since this rate of travel has a direct correlation to the maximum length spent by riders aboard the system.
- The website <https://ridesmiamidade.gov> should have a searchable link to a rider's monthly trip history and a link to file a complaint.

The members of the Commission on Disability Issues serve in an advisory capacity to the Miami-Dade County Commissioners but are also seen by many in the community as advocates for people with disabilities. Because of the latter, the Transportation / Access committee of the Commission on Disability Issues feels that they cannot support any part of an RFP that would reduce service to people with disabilities.

Housing Committee: Mr. Fulton reported that he will have a report next month. He said that there was a meeting at Norland Senior High School at 5:30 -7:30 to discuss the government's stimulus package and housing would be part of the discussion. There would be another meeting tomorrow, May 28 at Edison High School.

OLD Business

Ms. Heidi Johnson- Wright presented a brief update on the ADA office. **Marlins' Stadium Project:** On 5/7/09, the office met with Marlins' code consultant Wayne Meyer to review and discuss stadium plans.

- Thursday, June 11: 10:30am -12:30 pm: Wayne Meyer, Claude Delorme, Senior VP of Marlins Stadium Development and Stewart Ervie, architect with Populous, are holding a meeting to review the stadium plans and solicit comments from local disability advocacy groups and individuals.
- 2:30 - 4:30pm: Wayne Meyer and Stewart Ervie (or another architect from Populous), will attend a special CODI meeting at which they will present the plans for CODI's review.

Elections Polling Site Barrier Removal:

- 17 out of 37 sites completed.
- Elections is setting priorities for future sites.

Freedom By Design: Partnering with UM's arch school to select a disabled person in the community whose home does not currently accommodate their basic access needs, creating & implementing a design solution.

Rehab Housing Program: Partnering with CAA & OCED to re-establish program: provides low-interest, forgivable loans to people w/ disabilities whose homes are not fully accessible; program's success is not just a matter of drafting loan documents & providing contact info for reputable contractors; must incl. understanding the nuances of disability needs & barrier removal that accommodates those needs.

Proactive Partnering with other Depts. have included:

- **Public Works:** improving sidewalk transition plans & monitoring compliance with Nesbitt & other settlements
- **DHS:** barrier removal priorities
- **Parks/Building:** reworking special event permit process to ensure access of events
- **Seaport:** meeting with facilities' staff/touring the Port & participating in stakeholder meetings on the port's long range plan
- **TRAINING:** many different depts. for many types of positions from front-line customer service personnel at neigh. service centers to Corrections officers to DPRs.

Employment Initiative: Partnering with FEP & S. Fla Workforce & seeking community partners with which to develop a plan w/ ultimate goal of placing more people w/ disabilities in permanent positions w/ the County; use stimulus & regular funding to develop a comprehensive program that incl. Shadowing/mentoring; Internships; Recruiting/Hiring; Placement; Career Develop./Training. For FY 09-10: Continue to develop/refine ongoing **Employment Initiative** -Explore employment initiative **partnerships with private industry- Involve people with disabilities with our office**, through both internships and mentoring.

There was some discussion concerning the Marlins' Stadium presentation. Mr. Miller requested that the PowerPoint presentation should be available in text format and what time frame is available for comments. Ms. Hyams said she would email Mr. Meyers and ask him those questions.

There was a general discussion on how meetings and events are advertised, accessibility of websites, and access at the libraries.

Motion made by John Miller and seconded by Marie Schmidt to split the present Access/Transportation committee into separate committees. Motion unanimously.

Mr. Miller accepted the Chairmanship of the Access Committee.

Ms. Cox was introduced she said that she had been asked by Ms. Ruby Hemingway-Adams to come to CODI and to explain that the engineer that was suppose to come with Ms. Hemmingway-Adams was not in town and she and he would make it for the June meeting. Mr. Gregory asked Ms. Cox to rely his frustration at waiting yet another month for an explanation as to why some of CODI's suggestions were not accepted. He will be calling Ms. Hemingway-Adams to be sure she and the engineer make it to the June meeting.

New Business: Evan Piper from the City of North Miami Advisory Board on Disability presented information on Disability Enforcement Week which is a week long (July 20 – July 26) program to aggressively enforce the parking laws that affect people with disabilities. The City of North Miami Beach would like CODI's support of this program. The City plans to bring this to the Miami-Dade County Commissioners so this event could be a County-wide program.

Motion made by Ronald Fulton and seconded by Denise Valkema to bring to the Board of County Commissioners an official letter of support for this event which will bring greater

awareness of the difficulties people with physical disabilities have obtaining an appropriate parking space. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dicey spoke briefly of his recertification process for STS. He was very pleased it went so well. He said that it has been 20 years since he was certified and thought it was important to have recertification in order to be sure who STS is serving.

Mr. Martinez asked to revisit an official opinion that was passed in November concerning the service area. **Motion made by Jose Martinez and seconded by Denise Valkema to rescind the official opinion accepting the 5 plus $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area corridor to para-transit service area should be County - wide without regard to the fixed route corridor. Motion was passed unanimously.**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm